

In 1950, December 19, NATO named General Dwight D. Eisenhower as supreme commander of the Western European defense forces.

Then, in 1972, December 19, *Apollo 17*, the last of the *Apollo* moon landings, returned to Earth.

Then, in 1984, December 19—I remember this well because I was in Hong Kong when this happened—that was when China signed an accord returning Hong Kong to the Chinese sovereignty. A lot of people thought it was a good idea at the time to accept the people from Hong Kong. I was there, and look what has happened now after all these years. I would have to say that created a hysteria that has continued to this day.

Then, in 1998, December 19, U.S. President Bill Clinton was impeached. I was there for that one too. That was December 19, 1998.

The event that is more significant by a landslide is what happened on December 19 of 1959. On December 19, 1959, my wife Kay and I got married. That makes tomorrow our 61st wedding anniversary. Just look at all of the beauty that has followed us—20 kids and grandkids, all of that in a 61-year period of time.

What I want to say is the beautiful life that we are still having together—and, Kay, I love you more now than I did 61 years ago.

I say to the Senate leadership that you better get this last vote done by tonight or you will have to do it without me because I am going to be with Kay on our anniversary on Saturday, our 61st wedding anniversary.

To everyone else out there, as you celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmastime, I am going to say to you: Merry Christmas and God bless you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant minority leader.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am sorry I didn't come to the floor quickly enough to wish my friend Jim Inhofe and his wife the best. He is one of the real contributors in the U.S. Senate and has been for years. He is a special individual. He decided to take an interest in the continent of Africa. I don't know that there is another Senator who knows as much about that continent as he does. He has been there so many times. His stories, many of them, relate to countries that few people have heard of. He has made a special point to understand that continent, the people on it, in addition to his responsibilities serving the State of Oklahoma and, of course, now, as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, his responsibility for funding the Department of Defense. He and our Democratic colleague, Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island, have done a remarkable bipartisan job on that Defense authorization, let me add.

I sincerely hope that the President will sign that bill. His objections to it have nothing to do with the military or

defense of our country. They relate to issues which are thorny, political issues that shouldn't slow down these critical programs.

This authorization bill comes at an exceptional time. We have been learning over the last few weeks about a massive cyber security breach of our government, probably by the Russians. It has all the earmarks and fingerprints of Vladimir Putin project to compromise our national security and to create chaos whenever possible. We learned of it 4 years ago in the 2016 election, when every intelligence agency of our government agreed that the Russians were meddling in our election and doing their best to subvert the will of the American people.

We made strong statements in opposition to it, and we took action. Some of it has been publicly reported, and some of it has been disclosed to Members of Congress in a classified setting.

We were successful in thwarting their efforts in the 2018 election. I want to salute all of those who were responsible for that effort. In 2020, I believe the same can be said. We will know more as we sift through the evidence.

This latest disclosure is really troubling. We believe that beginning in March of this year, the Russians started compromising our cyber security network in many different ways. Every day there is a new disclosure of another agency that reports that they have somehow wheedled their way into this important, critical information. How much they know, what they have gained, how much they have compromised us, we don't know yet. It certainly is unnerving, and it deserves a very thorough—thorough—investigation as to how we failed.

You see, the United States was not taking anything for granted. We were literally spending billions—billions—of dollars for the safety of the security systems. We knew that included in those systems was information which is essential for the protection of the United States. To think that has been compromised at the hands of one of our implacable foes is certainly unnerving. I believe we should initiate a thorough and complete investigation, let the chips fall where they may, establish where we have failed from a technology viewpoint, and if any individuals are responsible, that they be held accountable.

At the same time, I have to say that I join the Presiding Officer in commenting on one particular aspect of this that I just can't understand. The White House has been virtually silent as all of these facts have unfolded by the day. I cannot understand that—why the Commander in Chief of the United States of America has not spoken out forcefully against the Russians for their involvement in this cyber security breach, why he has not likened this to a virtual invasion of the United States when it comes to our own national security. I believe that we should have been firm from the begin-

ning and honest with the American people, as well, about the nature of this threat. Instead, this President has been silent.

I recall not that long ago, a few months ago, we disclosed—we found evidence that the Russians were offering bounties on the heads of American soldiers in Afghanistan. It is an outrageous and unthinkable act. Yet the White House was silent, refused to respond to what I know—because I have seen it—was credible evidence that this was linked directly to Moscow and the operatives of the Russian Government. The attempted assassination of Navalny, the dissident in Russia, has been well documented. Yet, again, our White House, our President are silent. I don't understand it.

I am hopeful that the new President, Joe Biden, when he takes office January 20, will make it a priority to establish a new understanding and relationship with Vladimir Putin. The United States cannot be a victim of Putin over and over again without speaking out—and more. I am counting on Joe Biden to do that. I believe he will. He is a realist. I know he wants peace in the world, and I do, too, but we also must defend this country. The men and women in uniform who risk their lives every single day should be our highest priority.

I am heartened by Joe Biden's closing that he is using in all of his public speeches now. He, of course, says it more artfully than I will, but he calls on God to bless America but also God to keep our troops safe. I am sure it has special meaning to him since the death of his son Beau is a reminder of the sacrifices that not only the men and women in uniform but their families make for us every single day. I hope that continues to be the watchword of his administration.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, there is not much activity on the floor of the Senate today. I hope there will be before the end of the day. The leaders in the Senate and House—Democrat and Republican—as well as the White House, with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, are fast at work, we are told, establishing a COVID-19 relief bill.

I was part of an effort, which the Presiding Officer also shared in. It was a volunteer activity that involved about 3 weeks of endless telephone conferences and Zoom calls. Staff supported us all the way or we couldn't have done it.

But it started off with eight of us eating dinner one night and deciding to come together as a group to see if we could break the logjam. The whole notion of COVID-19 relief was dead in the water for some reason—no action, no activity.

We remember back in March when Congress—particularly, I remember the Senate, by a vote of 96 to 0, passed, on a bipartisan basis, the largest relief bill in the history of the United States. It was over \$3 trillion in the CARES